12/21/40

Dear Marty,

For the past week I have been trying to find a story about the Nazi connections of big business that is completely new. There has been a story in a recent issue of FRIDAY and some time ago PM had a few pieces. I haven't been able to get anything new. Neither used the beryllium story, as I remember it.

In the course of looking around I found that just about all the local observers expect nothing to come of the approved investigation of these connections, to be headed by Senator Wheeler. I have reasons to believe that Wheeler will do somet ing about it, probably in three or four months. There is a common misconception here that no founds were appropri ted for the investigation. However, he was empowered to requisition helf from the regular government departments and to spend up to $50,000 of the regular money of the Senate. I also found two eople, known to Wheeler, who believe they have b en promised jobs in this investigation.

If this investigation, as I believe it will, makes any effort to discover the truth about the international, especially Nazi, connections of our largest corporations a big scandal will result. For instance, on the sales of beryllium, persuant to an agreement with the Germans the American Berrylium Corp charged $205 for beryllium the total cost of which was $25. Hence its use by US in such important products as airplanes was discouraged. Meanwhile, the Germans not only got a nice rakeoff on every pound sold, but Hitler proceded to use the same m tal in his tremendous airplane production. Ford, General Motors,

will all be involved. Pratt and Whitney, according to the record of the Munitions Committee, made their patents available to the Nazis.

Speaking of the Munitions Committee, I believe that if you wanted it I could get a signed article by Senator Nye in which he would point out the pertinence of his investigation today, etc.

By way of background on the Wheeler investigation: It seems that one of the reasons for Wheeler pushing through the empowering resolution, which was handled by the Interstate Commerce Committee of which Wheeler is also chairman, was to forestall a similar project by Celude Pepper of Florida. By Senate custom, the author of a resolution which is approved becomes chairman of the committee it sets up. Many Senators don't think very well of Pepper's insistent war-mongering last Summer and fall. He's now stymied. The Wheeler resolution is, by its wording, in the interest of national defense. However, it is not part of the administration's "national defense program".

Part of the program which has received little attention and which will soon be in the news is the section of the Advisory Committee on National Defense under Miss Harriett Elliott, Dean of Women of the University of North Carolina. Her jurisdiction is over problems affecting the interests of the country's consumers. She is being eased out. Paul McNutt is gradually moving in. This comes from the statement to the press by Miss Elliott late in September in which she said,"Hungry, undernourished people do not make for strong defense. We have the lands, machines and hands it takes to produce and move and market all the food we need to assure everyone an adequate and safe diet. Let's get to work and see that everyone gets at least that." Her statement also said that there were 45,000,000 Americans living below what she called "the safety line". The

day following Miss Elliott's statement the President made a bid mistake athis press conference when he attempted to apss it off whith wisecracks (September 24). There was an immediate and continuing reaction from labor and consumer groups.

I think a story along the lines of Miss Elliott's atementment, showing the effects of malnutrition on the poeple, especially as reflected in draft figures, wouldn't take long to get together.

Another thing that might make a story, if you have any interest in that direction, is the will of the late Robert Marshall, one of the three sons of Louis Marshall, Guggenheimer partner. The other two sons are George, a New York economist and well-known progressive, and James, well-known concervative and President of the Board of Eductions of New York City. Bob made public service his career in spite of the fact he was a millionaire. He was particularly interested in forestry and had one of the top jobs in the forestry section of the Department of Agriculture. He was one of the most regular contributors to such liberal causes as the poll-tax and anti-lynching fights. In his will he divides more than $15500,000 between three trusts. One-fourth is fo forestry, one-fourth is for the defense of civil liberties and one half ~~of~~ fot the fostering of the interest of labor and "production for use." From this money three funds will be set up, with permanent organizations, which will become fairly important. The trustees-all well-known - are holding their first meeting in New York this weekend but there will be no action taken until the next meeting, whenever that will be. Among the trustees are Rober Baldwin, of the American Civil Liberties Union, both brothers, Raphael Zon, prominent in forestry circles, Jerry O'Connell, former Congressman from Montana, Thomas Finerty, noted New York Lawyer,

Edwin S. Smith, of the National Labor Relations Board, Gardner Jackson, former legislative representative of Labor's Non-Partisan League and probably Bob's best friend, Heber Blankenhorn, now with the NLRB and the man who conducted the investigation of the bloody steel strike of 1919 for the Interchurch World Committee, which ~~xxxxxx~~ was very critical of the steel trust.

If you are at all interested in an expose of Italian Fascist activity in this country please let me know and I'll get some samples and send them up to you. I can get here in Washington some documentary evidence that should be pretty good. In New York there is considerable more that I am confident I can get.

Please let me know when I can expect proofs of the Bata story so I can plan. I also need them as soon as possible because there is one touchy aspect that might make their use by a Member of the House difficult: the references to a Member of the other House. That's one of the taboos.

I hope your health has improved. If I get home for New Years I'll be up to see you.

Best regards

Harold